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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 HARARE 000832

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AF/S FOR D. MOZENA, B. NEULING
NSC FOR SENIOR AFRICA DIRECTOR C. COURVILLE
USUN FOR EMILY BRUNO

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SUBJECT: UNDP RESREP GETS RELIGION ON LOOMING IDP, FOOD
CRISES

REF: (A) HARARE 830 (B) HARARE 790 (C) HARARE 786 (D)
HARARE 773 (E) HARARE 737

Classified By: Charge d'Affaires, a.i., Eric T. Schultz under Section 1
.4 b/d

Summary

1. (C) In a meeting at UNDP offices on June 13, the CDA told UNDP Resrep Zacarias that we were concerned about the potential for the Operation Restore Order to further exacerbate the looming food crisis. Moreover, as long as the operation continued, donors and relief agencies were chasing a moving target in trying to help victims. Zacarias said the UN was also deeply concerned and was pressing GOZ officials both locally and from New York. However, the UN needed to maintain its channels of communication to the GOZ and for that reason was reluctant to criticize the GOZ publicly. End Summary.

U.S. Concerns

2. (C) The Charge opened the meeting by stressing that the GOZ's "Operation Restore Order" (refs A and E) was continuing and that with each passing day was creating more displaced people. IOM's figure had jumped from 150,000 to 200,000 in just the past week. The daily displacement of new IDPs and the absence of any "authorized" place for many to relocate made the needy a moving target, compounding the challenges of relief agencies and the donors trying to support them. We were also receiving reports that the GOZ was obstructing relief agencies from accessing the swelling ranks of desperate IDPs.

3. (C) The Charge noted that the abrupt dislocation of so many people would also undoubtedly compound Zimbabwe's increasingly precarious food situation (refs B and D). Indeed, the IDP and food situations were mutually reinforcing crises. He urged the UNDP to use its good offices to press the GOZ to cease "Restore Order" and to cooperate fully with the international community on food security. The USG stood ready to help on humanitarian relief but could do little without greater transparency and cooperation on the GOZ's part.

UN Growing Increasingly Worried As Well

4. (C) Zacarias responded that the UN offices shared our assessment of Zimbabwe's converging food and IDP crises. Transparency and a lack of access to vulnerable populations were central problems presented by the GOZ. Getting better information on Zimbabwe's food security was especially imperative. The UN was pressing the GOZ both from here in Harare and from New York. Zacarias said he had a meeting scheduled June 14 with Minister of Public Service, Labor, and Social Welfare Goche, and undertook to brief us after the meeting.

5. (C) Zacarias said there were differences of opinion within his office on how to address the IDP situation in the face of GOZ obstructionism. Relief efforts were only reaching about 20 percent of those affected by Restore Order and the degree of cooperation from local authorities varied widely. The local IOM chief felt efforts should cease until the GOZ gave explicit authority to deliver relief. Zacarias complimented IOM's efforts but said he disagreed with his IOM chief. He felt relief efforts to aid those in need should continue to the extent possible. He planned to raise these issues with Goche and hoped to get explicit approval for IOM's operations.

6. (C) Zacarias noted that Zimbabwe's situation was receiving attention at the highest levels in New York. The Secretary-General would be meeting in the coming week with

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representatives from the UN bureaus on humanitarian, development, and political affairs on how to approach Zimbabwe. He said the UN could take a more forceful role on Zimbabwe if the GOZ did not change course. A meeting might be arranged between the Secretary-General and Mugabe, possibly in July. Zacarias asked that we treat this information with the utmost discretion.

But Wants to Keep Channels to GOZ Open

17. (C) Zacarias said discretion was critical to the UN,s hopes of influencing GOZ behavior. His office wanted to change GOZ behavior without jeopardizing its influence and channels of communication with the GOZ. In that vein, his office would not be speaking publicly on these issues; any statements on Zimbabwe would emanate from New York or Geneva - and none were planned at this time. He noted in that regard that the public comments of the UN Special Rapporteur on Housing, Miloon Kothari, were not authoritative. Kothari was outside the UN,s central hierarchy. Zacarias noted, however, that public statements by other governments and NGOs on Zimbabwe's deteriorating situation were useful to the UN in its dealings with the GOZ.

18. (C) The Charge agreed that keeping channels open with the GOZ open was an important means to an end but was not an end in itself. The goal was to get the GOZ to stop "Restore Order" and to open up the food situation before it was too late. He closed by urging continued close collaboration between UN offices and the broader diplomatic community.

Comment

19. (C) Just a week ago, in a June 7 meeting with the donor community (ref B), Zacarias had downplayed the food and IDP situations, only to be contradicted by his own staff. He now appears to share his IOM and WFP chiefs' sense of alarm at the convergence of these two crises in the months ahead. As a result, he also appears ready to abandon the UN,s cherished role here as a mediator between the GOZ and the international community and to join the latter in putting pressure on the GOZ. This would be a welcome development since the UN remains one of the few external actors with any real influence over the GOZ.

SCHULTZ